YOSHIKAWA.

Washington's Japanese cherries.
[1927?]

THE BEST SOUVENIER OF
THE NATIONAL CAPITAL

Washington's Japanese Cherries

By
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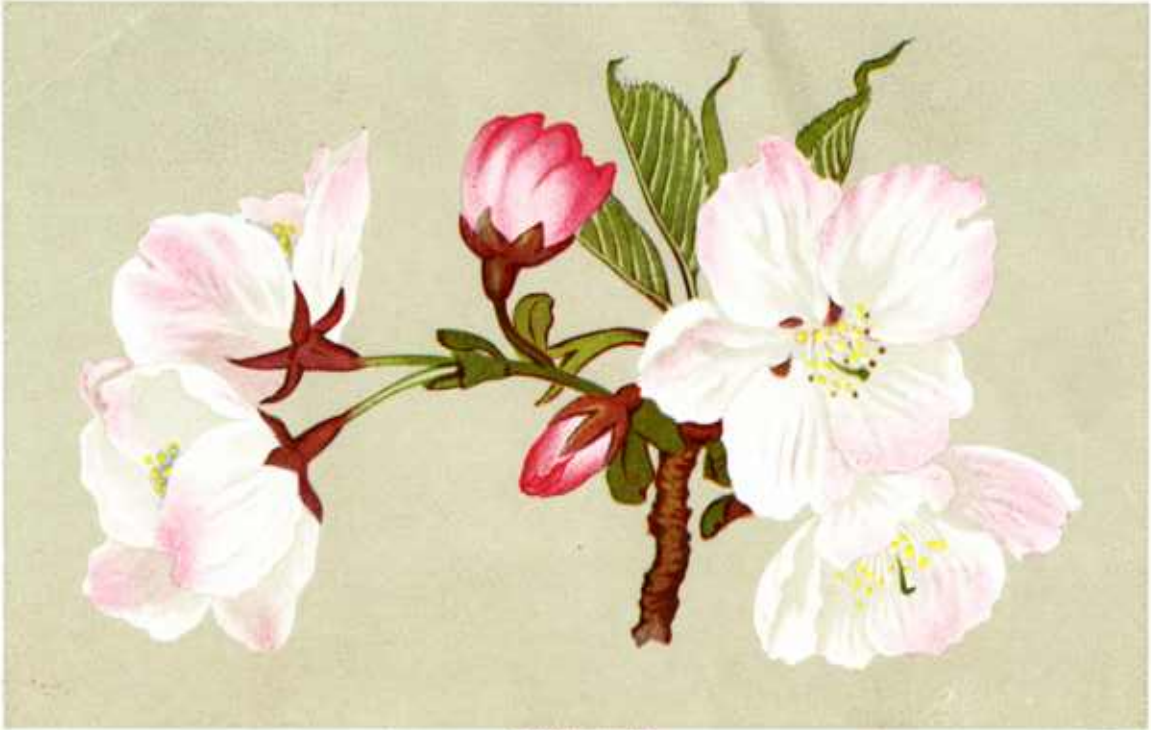
FORMERLY OF U. S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Kanzan (Kwanzan)

Fugenzo

Ariake



Mikurumagaeshi

ichiyo

Shirayuki

Fukurokuju

Taki - nioi

Surugadai-nioi

Jonioi

Gyoikō

Preface.

In view of a nation-wide interest in the Japanese cherry blossoms in Washington, D. C., the author of this book feels that it is desirable and helpful to the lovers of the flowers, who come a long way to view this supreme beauty of the spring time, to have an illustration and a description of these wonderful flowers. It is hoped that this book will give the reader a truer understanding and deeper appreciation of the cherries, and at the same time will serve as a souvenier of the dream-like scenery, which will live forever in the memory of those who have seen the brilliant pink cloud in Potomac Park.

Brief History of the Trees.

These Japanese cherries in Potomac Park, Washington, D. C., came as a present from the City of Tokyo, the capital of Mikado's land, to the capital of the United States, as a token of good will and high esteem.

The scions of twelve varieties of the flowering cherries were taken from the river bank of Arakawa, near Tokyo, after a careful selection by the authorities, in December, 1910, and grafted in the special nursery set for this purpose near the Okitsu Imperial Horticultural Experiment Station, Shizuoka-ken, Japan, in February, 1911. The trees grew well under the good management of Japanese authorities. They were dug in December, 1911, shipped to Washington D. C., after a severe inspection by the plant quarantine officials and were planted in Potomac Park early in 1912.

Twelve Varieties of Cherries.

No. 1. Somei-Yoshino (or Yoshino)-(single).

More than 800 trees of Somei-Yoshino are planted around the Tidal Basin in an almost unbroken circle. Some are planted along the first hole of F course of the East Potomac Golf Links and some 24 trees have been transplanted in the Agricultural Department Grounds.

The pink cloud-like flowers suddenly burst into the realm of life in either late March or early April, before the appearance of leaves. These winsom flowers are single, with 5 petals to each flower, light pink in color, slightly fragrant and come out in clusters, being the first of the twelve varieties to bloom. It is also a rare beauty to watch the flattering petals in a gentle spring breeze. The trees are hardy, quick growing, 25-40 feet in height and wide spread in habit, much larger than the later blooming varieties.

No. 2. Kwanzan (or Kanzan)-(double).

Nearly 250 trees of this beautiful cherry are planted at Hains Point in East Potomac Park.

The flowers are a lovely deep pink in color and very large in size, about 2 inches in diameter, 30 petals and 2 leaf-shaped pistils to each flower. The flowering begins just after the middle of April. The

trees are 15-20 feet in height and upright spreading in habit, the large branches spreading diagonally from the middle of the trees.

No. 3. Fugenzo (double).

More than 100 trees of this brilliant variety are planted along the East Potomac Drive and also along the Lincoln Memorial Drive.

The flowers are pink, becoming almost white in center with age, and are rather large in size, about 1.8 inches in diameter, with more than 30 petals and 2 leaf-shaped pistils to each flower. The top of a pistil bends and has the form of an elephant's trunk, thereby deriving the name of Fugenzo, Fugen's elephant. This variety blooms just after Kwanzan and is one of the latest varieties. The trees are of spreading habit, the branches spreading wide from the upper part of the tree.

No. 4. Ariake (single).

Over 60 trees of this cherry are planted along the east drive.

The flowers are rather large, more than 1.5 inches in diameter, and white in color with a lovely rosy tinge. The bronze-colored leaves come out at the same time as the flowers and the effect of leaves among the flowers is perfectly wonderful. Ariake,

sifnifing "dawn", blooms about the second week of April, just before Mikurumagaeshi. The trees are about 20 feet in height with large wide spreading branches.

No. 5. Mikurumagaeshi (single-double).

About 15 trees of this attractive variety are planted along the east drive.

The flowers are light pinky white in color, about 1.5 inches in diameter and usually single, but sometimes mixed with semi-double flowers. It blooms about the middle of April. The branches grow uniformly tall, reaching nearly 20 feet in height.

Ages ago, a Mikado of Japan, passed under this cherry in full bloom. A little later, a discussion arose among his courtiers and guards as to whether it was single or double variety, whereupon the Mikado returned in his carriage to view the cherry again. This is said to be the origin of the name Mikurumagaeshi, signifying "Returning the carriage". It also have the name of Yae-hitoe, Double-single.

No. 6. Ichiyo (double).

Over 100 trees of this lovely cherry are planted along the speed-way.

The flowers come out in corymbose clusters, are large in size, with more than 30 petals to each flower, delicate light pink on the outside and white inside. The flowering begins in the third week of April and

remains in full glory for a comparatively long time. The trees grow well and the branches spread high and wide.

No. 7. Shirayuki (single).

About 100 trees of this snow-like cherry are planted along the eastdrive.

The flowers are pure white in color, as the name Shirayuki, snow-flakes, signifies, about 1.5 inches across and 2 or 3 come out in a cluster, with hairy peduncles. The flowering begins 4 or 5 days after Somei-Yoshino. The trees are similar to the common Yama-zakura, the original variety of the most ornamental cherries, but the branches grow upright and the bark is deep violet in color. The name was given by Dr. Manabu Miyoshi, the foremost authority on the cherries.

No. 8. Fukurokuju (double).

Nearly 40 trees of this admirable variety are planted along the east drive.

The flowers are marvelously beautiful, large in size, about 1.8 inches in diameter, lovely pink in color, gradually paling toward the center, with 15-20 petals to each flower, and, forming dense corymbose clusters, each tree in full bloom suggests a huge bunch of roses. The flowering begins just after the middle of April. The trees are of upright habit and the branches spread from about 6 feet above the ground.

No. 9. Taki-nioi (single).

More than 50 trees of this fragrant cherry are planted along both sides of East Potomac Park.

The flowers are rather small, about 0.8 inch in diameter, with 5 petals to each flower, and white in color, but the inside of the flower becomes pink in a later stage. It blooms late in April. The trees are of spreading habit, with large branches.

No. 10. Surugadai-nioi (single).

Although the record of shipment from Japan shows there were 50 trees of this variety sent to Washington, the authorities of Department of Agriculture never could identify any trees as this variety.

This cherry is similar to Taki-nioi. The flowers are fragrant, white in color, though pink in bud, small, about 0.8 inch across, and 5 petals to each flower. The flowering begins late in April, this being one of the latest varieties. The trees are of upright habit and the branches grow straight upward.

No. 11. Jo-nioi.

Almost 150 trees of this perfumed cherry are planted along both sides of East Potomac Park, many of them between the club house and railroad.

The flowers are very fragrant, silky white or pale pink in color, more than 1.2 inches in diameter with 5 petals to each flower. It blooms rather late in April.

The trees are of spreading habit, with the tips of the branches pointing upward.

No. 12. Gyoiko (double).

About 30 trees of this rare variety are planted along the east drive, mostly near Hains Point.

The flowers are curious rather than spectacular, because of their greenish petals, which are small with wide green and light pink stripes, about 1.2 inches in diameter and about 15 petals to each flower. The flowering of this cherry begins in the third week of April. The trees are upright in habit, though the small branches spread wide.

Romance of Japanese Cherry Blossoms.

By Masao Yoshikawa.

Shikishima no
Yamato-gokoro wo
Hito towaba,
Asahi ni niwo-o
Yamazakura-bana
(Isles of blest Japan.
Should your Yamato spirit
Strangers seek to scan,
Say——scenting morn's sunlit air,
Blows the cherries wild and fair.)

This is the most representative of countless poems composed on the cherries, and the Japanese think it truly represents and expresses the Yamato-damashii, the spirit and ideals of Nippon.

Yamazakura (Prunus Pseudo-Cerasus Lindl.) referred to in the verse, is the original variety of the most ornamental cherries, growing naturally on the mountain sides and in the forests of Japan, reaching 20 to 30 feet in height, generally resembling Somei-Yoshino in shape; the leaves and flowers coming out at the same time in early spring. The flowers are rather small, with 5 very pale pink petals.

From this description the reader will readily imagine that this variety is far inferior in its beauty to the brilliant Fugenzo or Ichiyo, the double flowers of which come out in beautiful pinky clusters, as will

be seen in the Potomac Park later in April. And it naturally leads the reader to question why the Japanese people esteem Yamazakura as their symbol rather than the more beautiful and brilliant double varieties.

A full explanation would make too long a story. The writer hopes, however, that the following will help the reader to understand the Japanese sentiment about the cherries, though it is not sufficient to explain the peculiar inspiration the Japanese get from their famed national flowers,

The Japanese philosophy of human life, chiefly developed upon Buddhist ideals, is that the present life is a matter of a moment and nothing but a dream. This thought is very well illustrated by the farewell poem of Taiko Hideyoshi, the shining light of the feudal age of Japan about 350 years ago.

Born into this world like a dewdrop,
The present life is but a dream in the dream.
And soon vanishes into nothingness.

This thougnt of human life strikingly resembles the fate of Yamazakura, which suddenly bursts into the realm of life, glorifies the world by its sheer beauty and brilliancy, and quickly fades away into nothingness.

The life of the cherry blossom is brief, indeed, and so is the human life when compared to eternity, though both are wonderful and worth while.

Yononaka wa
Mikka minuma no
Sakura kana.

(Life is short, like the three days' glory of the cherry blossoms.)

The falling of the petals of cherry blossoms from the parent branches is a source of great admiration and attraction to the Japanese, whose ideal, especially that of Bushi (warriors), is to pass out this world without hesitation when the occation arises, always ready to make surpreme sacrifice. The flowers of Yamazakura leave the parent branches with ease as the valiant warriors die bravely and gladly for the cause, while flowers of doubl varieties never fall from the mother trees. In other words, Yamazakura represents the high, manly spirit, purity, dignity and bravery, but the double varieties are more feminine in nature, representing beauty, delicacy and virtue.

The falling petals fluttering in the gentle Spring breeze, poetically called "the snow unknown to sky," give the Japanese a beautiful romantic impression and appeal to them as strongly as do the cherries in full glory. These thoughts and feeling are very delicate, almost verging upon mere sentimentalism, but in reality they rest on a deep foundation trained for many centuries,

The cherry blossoms are truly flowers of the wilderness, and it is difficult to appreciate their real beauty without the historical background and natural surroundings. They are entirely unfit to decorate rooms and tables; are much better in gardens and parks, and are at their best on quiet mountain sides. Some of the cherries in East Potomac Park, trimmed

like peaches, are only a little better than peaches when seen from the Japanese viewpoint, and, to explain this, a famous saying thus goes:

Sakura kiru Baka:
Momo kiranu Baka.

(The fool is he who trims the cherries, and who does not prune the peaches.)

While many people are in the festival mood in the season of cherry blossoms, and spend the days as seasonal holidays, the more sensitive and philosophical persons see the flowers with a background of thought, and these latter are frequently connected with famous episodes in the history of Nippon.

Marching on at the head of a great army sent by the emperor to subdue a rebellion in northern Japan nearly 900 years ago, Hachiman Taro Yoshiie, a man of great ability and valor and head of the famous Minamoto clan, passed Nokoso-no-Seki, the gate of Nakoso, on his way to the battleground, in midst of Spring. The cherries were in full glory at the gate of Nakoso and the falling petals were flattering like snowflakes in a Spring breeze. He reined his bucephalus beneath these cherry blossoms and composed a beautiful poem which later was included in an imperial collection:

Pray the Gate of Nakoso hinder the breeze,
But, alas, see flowers of Yamazakura,
Fluttering down onto the roadside.

Doubtless the reader will catch the human thought of his regret, and sorrow at seeing his beloved, valiant

warriors fall on the battlefield like the cherry blossoms before the Spring breeze. The image of a gallant mounted warrior, dressed in classical armor and composing a poem beneath the cherries in full glory and amid fragrant pink snowflakes, affords material for a masterpiece by a great artist.

One calm Spring day, poor old Issa, who lived about 200 years ago and was famous for his skillful use of slang in his poems, went all alone to see the cherry blossoms on a distant mountainside. When he reached the place he sat down under the cherries in full bloom and for a while lost himself in the heavenly pink cloud. Then he took out his pipe and tobacco, lazily searched for his light, and was surprised and disappointed to find that he left it at home. One of his best poems was composed at this moment:

Hana no kage
Namusan Hiuchi
Wasurekeri.
(By golly——forgot the fire and I can't smoke leisurely,
Under the cherry blossoms,)

Rengetsu, a nun with an angelic love, wandered into a remote village in a spring evening, hungly and wearly. She begged for a night's rest at several doors, but the villagers politely refused to take her in, though this was strange in Japan. At last she sheltered herself under a large cherry tree in full bloom. It was a marvelous spring night and through

the mist the full moon arose in the eastern sky, shedding a dim, soft light upon the flowers and our poor nun. No one could be angry in this dream-land because of villagers' unkindness, and a genuine appreciation of her fomous poem will be the reader's when he or she acts a part with Nun Rengetsu in this wonderful pageant:

'Tis thro' your kindness when you bade me go,
And harshly turned me from your doorway,
That I shall sleep where fragrant cherries blow,
Beneath a misty moon this night in May.

There is a beautiful story, probably never before told nor written, about Miss Hannah Riddell, the founder of Kumamoto Lepers' Hospital, Kumamoto, Japan. Still a young and charming maiden, Miss Riddell went to Japan from England in 1901 as a missionary. Soon after her arrival in the land of cherry blossoms, she strolled to Hommyo-ji Temple, near Kumamoto City, primarily to see the cherries and temple. It was an early, peaceful Spring morning, and on the way to the temple she passed through an arcade of lovely pink cloud, composed of myriad brilliant cherry blossoms, the rising sun gloriously reflected in the dewdrops hanging on the flowers. In fact, she said she never saw such a heavenly scene in her life. But when she arrived at the temple, after passing this fairylike scenery, Miss Riddell was completely overtaken by surprise and stricken with horror and pity in seeing the unfortunate, miserable lepers gathered in the temple ground, Hommyo-ji being

the mecca of lepers in Japan. She determined, just there and then, to devote her whole life to the relief of those poor, helpless people, and as the result there stands now in Kumamoto City the Lepers' Hospital of Resurrection of Hope, one of the noblest memorials of humanity.

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